

EPA puts Revere tract on priorities list

By Robert E. Murphy Jr.
Staff Writer

The home of the former Revere Chemical Co. in Nockamixon Township has been named, as expected, to the national priorities list of hazardous waste sites, officials said.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency Tuesday also named Harbucks Inc. of Joppa, Md., current owners of the site, as one of six "potentially responsible parties," said EPA spokesman Raymond P. Germann Jr.

The EPA considers as potentially responsible parties the current or former owners of a hazardous waste site and any people or companies deemed to have had a part in getting toxic materials to a site, Germann said.

Along with Harbucks, he said, the EPA also named the following businesses as potentially responsible parties for the Revere site: Carpenter Technology Corp., Reading; IBM Corp., White Plains, N.Y.; Western Electric division of AT&T, Berkeley Heights, N.J.; East Falls Corp., Frazer, Pa.; and Circuit Foil Corp., Palatine, Ill.

The EPA is negotiating with the six businesses to try to get them to pay for a study of what hazardous materials remain at the site and how they should be removed, Germann said, adding the agency also wants the businesses to pay for the cleanup work.

The 111-acre property is located on Route 611 just south of Revere. It once was home to Echo Inc. and the Revere Chemical Co., both of which recycled liquid and other wastes from metal plating and etching companies.

Early in 1970 a Bucks County court order closed down operations at the site. The state Department of Environmental Resources eventually spent more than \$400,000 to pump millions of gallons of toxic chemicals out of lagoons there and mix lime into the soil to neutralize acids.

In March 1984, the EPA spent about \$125,000 from the Superfund to remove toxic materials someone had dumped there after the state cleanup.

More than 1½ years ago, the Nockamixon Township supervisors denied Harbucks' curative amendment application seeking

permission to open a construction stone quarry on the site.

A three-judge Bucks County court panel heard Harbucks' appeal of the decision about one year ago, and has yet to announce its ruling.

The EPA order announced Tuesday was signed by A. James Barnes, deputy EPA administrator.

The order "gives us flexibility to clean up the site ourselves if necessary," Germann said. "Before, we could have finished the study (of the land) but we could not have done the cleanup."

The EPA expects talks will lead to the six businesses paying cleanup costs, he said, adding that if negotiations break down, the agency could pay for the work itself and sue the businesses to recover its costs.

Germann cautioned the site probably will not be cleaned up soon.

"As with most NPL (national priorities list) sites, it (the Revere tract) doesn't appear to be an immediate threat," he explained. "Therefore, we feel we have more time to reach an agreement."

"If there were an emergency threat, we could spend money on it tomorrow," he added.

Along with the Revere site, the EPA Tuesday named 98 other hazardous waste locations to its national priorities list — places "among the most serious hazardous waste sites in the country," Germann said.

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